

CORPUS CHRISTI, TEX.

CALLER

(Sun. CALLER-TIMES)

m. 63,777

S. 73,379

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Date: JUL 16 1964

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Modesett Says U.S. Should Seize Cuba

By MIKE MARTIN

A former Navy intelligence officer who was stationed at Guantanamo Air Force Base said here yesterday that the time has come for the United States to ignore world opinion and take Cuba away from Fidel Castro.

Jack Modesett Jr., who was stationed at the naval base in Cuba for 18 months, made the remark while addressing a luncheon meeting of the Southside Rotary Club at the Privateers' Country Club.

"There are all kinds of dirty tricks that (The CIA) can play on another country," he said. "Some of them have been tried and some haven't."

He said that in view of the fact that only three Latin American countries now recognize Castro's Cuba, anti-intervention feelings in other Spanish-speaking countries apparently are not as strong as some "experts" seem to think.

Modesett, a Princeton graduate said the United States has "passed up" two major opportunities to seize Cuba from Castro. The first was the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion; the second, Kennedy's blockade in 1962.

Both attempts, he said, fumbled as the result of political blunders. He said the Bay of Pigs invasion cost the U.S. about \$35 million and would have been successful had politicians seen fit to follow through with air attacks as had been planned by the CIA.

Blames Politicians

"The military planners saw that the Bay of Pigs invasion

of Fidel Castro should be "foremost in the minds of our leaders."

Modesett said the CIA had trained Cuban exiles to fly U.S. planes. He said he asked one such pilot, stationed in Nicaragua, what happened and was told that the planes were halted at the runway.

"It was simply a matter of not wanting our forces to get involved in it," Modesett said. "The invasion was planned to be carried out by Cuban refugees, not U.S. troops."

He said he feels there should be some way to "reintroduce" the "great refugee power we have access to" and that defeat

of Fidel Castro should be "foremost in the minds of our leaders."

"I'm not convinced that Latin American opinion is adverse to our intervention," Modesett said. The three Latin American countries now recognizing Cuba apparently are more interested in trade with the island than in supporting its political stand.

Modesett told the group that an estimated 80 per cent of all Cubans are simply apathetic about Castro. About 10 per cent, he said, is actively against the dictator. Another 10 per cent "is on his side," he said.

Propaganda Need Cited

He said the CIA is to blame for not having effectively organized anti-Castro public opinion among Cubans and for failing to bring about an effective guerrilla movement against the dictator.

"But it is hard to engage the support of Cubans," he said. The large group of Cubans who are apathetic need to be "told what they can do to help," he added.

The greatest tragedy of the Communist take-over, he feels, is the "damage to the children." Modesett said that Communist teachers seize the minds of Cuban children when they are six. For the next ten years, the young Cubans are brainwashed with Red propaganda, he said.

"Then nothing can be done," he said. "Castro has done something that has not been done before in the 20th Century. He has taken a people's real desire to overcome the wrongs of (Batista) and subverted it to the purposes of an international Communist movement."

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